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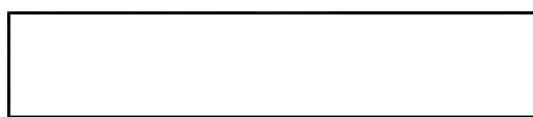
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Communist China: Wall posters defending and praising Chou En-lai suggest the premier has been under attack from more radical party leaders seeking to reduce his authority.

There has been no recent public criticism of Chou, but he may have been the indirect target of attacks on senior government and party personalities long associated with him. Most posters defending Chou describe him as a "close comrade" of Mao Tse-tung. One Western correspondent in Peking reported seeing a poster describing Chou as Mao's "closest comrade," a term normally reserved for Defense Minister Lin Piao.

There is other evidence that the power struggle continues. Two recent posters, both signed by ultra-militant Red Guard leaders, report continuing dissension in the leadership. One of these posters, put up on 16 March, stated that both the party's Central Committee and its Military Affairs Committee were meeting in an atmosphere of "struggle." The statement was attributed to a speech by Nieh Yuan-tzu, the female leader of Peking University Red Guards who has been close to Mao and probably is in a position to know about high-level meetings.

Posters put up in Peking on 18 March indicate that compromises apparently reached in February with leaders in strategic border regions like Sinkiang Province are being hotly contested by powerful Red Guard groups in Peking. [redacted]

[redacted] the capital is flooded with posters denouncing Wang En-mao, military and party boss in Sinkiang, and demanding his dismissal.

(continued)

The posters were signed by several prominent Red Guard organizations including the one controlled by Nieh Yuan-tzu. Wang was under heavy Red Guard fire from last September to January, but the pressure eased after a poster in late January reported that Chou En-lai was negotiating with him. A broadcast from Sinkiang on 12 March praised Wang as a "good" cadre and said he had met recently with Mao and Lin Piao.

While top-level feuding goes on, the army continues to serve as the main instrument for restoring order throughout the country. The military, for example, appears to have taken over the party committees for both Canton city and Kwangtung Province.

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